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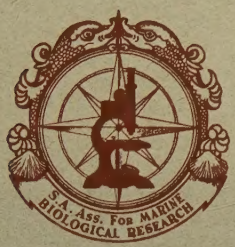

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Investigational Report No. 1

SHARK ATTACK ON FISHING BOAT IN SOUTH AFRICA

by

David H. Davies

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Published by

THE OCEANOGRAPHIC RESEARCH INSTITUTE
2 WEST STREET, DURBAN
SOUTH AFRICA

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SHARK ATTACK ON FISHING BOAT IN SOUTH AFRICA

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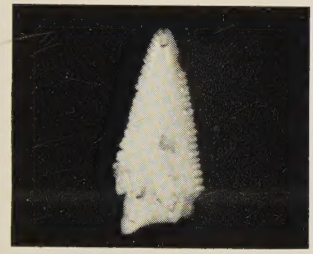
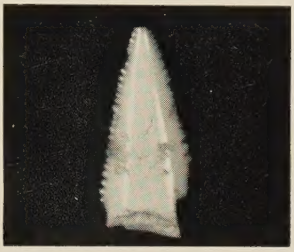
During October 1960, eight men were fishing from a 24 foot boat approximately three miles from Gordon's Bay harbour in False Bay. False Bay is situated about 30 miles from Cape Town, South Africa.



Tooth fragment, external view



Tooth fragment, internal view

FIG. 1.

The fishing was good and shad *Pomatomus saltator* (Linnaeus) were being caught on hand-lines when a large shark was seen to be circling the boat. The presence of the shark so near the boat caused the skipper some concern and having ordered the crew to stop fishing he went below to start the engine.

One of the men disobeyed the order, however, and went on fishing. He hooked a shad and as he was pulling it in the shark rushed at the fish but missed it, hitting the gunwale of the boat with considerable force and then falling back into the sea.

With all lines in and the boat ready to move off, the shark circled the boat again and suddenly charged at great speed making a vicious bite into the side of the boat. The boat was damaged to the extent of an 18-inch hole, fortunately above the water mark, and a large fragment (18 mm. in length) of a tooth (see *Fig. 1*) was later found embedded in the woodwork.

The tooth fragment was sent to the Oceanographic Research Institute, Durban by Mr. B. de Jager, Assistant Director of Fisheries, for identification.

Detailed examination of the tooth and comparison with teeth in the shark jaw collection of the Institute showed that it belonged to the mid-lower jaw of what is known in South Africa as the Blue-pointer Shark *Carcharodon carcharias* (Linnaeus) of large size.

Acknowledgment

Grateful acknowledgment is made for the funds provided for the survey of the sharks of the Natal region by the Council for Scientific and Industrial Research, Pretoria, South Africa.

BD&P 5606 7/61